International Terrorism, discussions on which, as the 54th UN General Assembly has decided, will commence in September 2000.

At the bilateral level also, discussions on the need to tackle and eliminate terrorism forms an important part of agenda for deliberations with key countries.

Regional Initiatives to Tackle Terrorism

3579. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned ""Regional initiative needed to tackle terrorism" which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated 26th January, 2000;

(b) whether a view was exressed that the forces fired by the ideologies of extremism/fanaticism and equipped with more lethal power are needed to be tackled urgently; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to tackle the growing menance of terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) Government have seen the report appearing in the Hindustan Times dated 26th January, 2000.

(b) Pakistan and the Taliban controlled areas of Afghanistan are witnessing the spread of obscurantist ideologies, the expansion of narcotics trade and above all the pursuit of terrorism as State policy.

(c) Government remain firm in their resolve to take all necessary measures to preserve the security and terrotorial integrity of the country. Government have effectively and appropriately, also brought to the attention of the international community, Pakistan's support to cross-border terrorism and attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of India. Facts regarding Pakistan's State sponsorship of terrorism have been brought before several international fora and raised at high-level bilateral discussions with world leaders.

South African High Commissioner on Match-Fixing Scandal

3580. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the South African High Commissioner was recently called in